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[p.v]

FOREWORD

114 THE study of religions can be approached in many different ways and can present a number of different kinds of problems. For social anthropologists, or for some of them, one major problem is that of the social function of religion—how does religion contribute to the existence of society as an ordered and continuing system of relationships amongst human beings? It is recognized that religion is a binding force amongst individuals, and it would seem that the etymology of the word indicates this. The scientific problem is how religion does this; how, in other words, it functions. The problem is one of very considerable complexity, and it cannot be said that at present we know very much about this subject. The only method by which we can hope ultimately to arrive at an understanding of it is by a number of analytic descriptive studies of religions of diverse types, so that by systematic comparison it may be possible to arrive at some general theory. This work of Dr. Srinivas is an important contribution to that investigation. It gives us a description and analysis of the religious practices of a people of India, the Coorgs of Coorg.

For the social anthropologist the religion of a people presents itself in the first instance not as a body of doctrine, but as what we may call 'religious' behaviour as a part of social life. Social anthropology is behaviouristic in the sense that we seek to observe how people act as a necessary preliminary to trying to understand how they think and feel. This book, by a trained anthropologist, who is himself an Indian, and who has therefore an understanding of Indian ways of thought which it is difficult for a European to attain even over many years, gives us a scientifically valuable and objective account of the religious behaviour of a particular Indian community.

771 In an investigation into the social function of religion in a parti-
● 182 cular society the first thing required is to examine the relation of the religion to the social structure. In this respect the religion of the Coorgs is of very special interest and value. For we may say that there are three different structural systems in which the individual Coorg is involved, and each of these has its own system of religious behaviour and obligations.

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396 794 In the first place the Coorg individual is a member of a domestic group, the *okka* or patrilineal joint-family. His closest social ties are with this group and its members, and the well-being of this group is something that is for him of supreme importance. Each such group has its own religious cult. There are daily religious observances of the members of the joint family. There are recurrent occasions on which ritual performances are called for. Any event which affects the solidarity or well-being of the group is an occasion of ritual, such as in births, deaths, and marriages. Piety, for a Coorg, is in the first place the observance of the requirements of this domestic cult.

114 794 182 Dr. Srinivas has described for us the various features of this domestic cult, but he has done more than that. He has helped us to see the social function of these rituals as expressing and maintaining the solidarity and continuity of the structural system. Further, he has sought, with some considerable measure of success, to reveal the meaning of the ritual idiom of the Coorg domestic cult. In any system of ritual each ritual action has its meaning, and the totality of such meanings constitutes the idiom of that system. Just as different societies have different languages so also they have their systems of ritual idiom, and it is the task of the social anthropologist to investigate a system of ritual idiom in the same way that he studies a language. To understand the way a people talk it is necessary to know the idiom of their language; to understand a religion it is necessary to have some understanding of the ritual idiom in which they express their religious sentiments. We do not understand the Coorg domestic cult unless we understand the religious meaning to the Coorgs of the lamp hanging in the hall of the house; and other features of their rites and ceremonies.

621 794 Besides being a member of a joint family (*okka*) the Coorg individual is a member of a village community which includes not only persons of his own caste but also members of other castes. The village community has its own religious cult, with its god or gods and its temple or shrine or temples. The village-deities, when properly propitiated, protect the village and its inhabitants from smallpox and plague and other supernatural evils, and afford blessings such as good health and abundant crops. Thus the cult of the village-deities is a collective action of the community. Just as the domestic cult has for its ostensible aim the preservation of the well-being of the particular group, so the village cult has for its

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564 'caste'. There are some thousands of such groups in India as a whole. A caste is in its essence a religious group, membership of which entails certain ritual observances. The rules of caste behaviour are rules of religion.

The caste system of India presents a kind of social structure that is of special interest to comparative sociology. There are two major features. The first of these is what we may call 'separatism'. There are important rules which limit the social contact of members of different castes. The rule of endogamy prohibits marriage between members of different castes or sub-castes. There are caste rules as to the persons with whom one may partake of a meal, or from whose hands one may accept food or drink. The second important feature is that there is religious or ritual inequality of castes. Any man born as a Brahmin is holy; he might therefore become a priest and perform the priestly functions even if in actuality he becomes a cook or a water-carrier. At the other, lower, end of the scale are the people now called 'Untouchable'—leather-workers, sweepers, and so on, who are by birth 'unclean' or 'polluted' and with whom contact produces pollution in the members of superior castes. The inequality between persons that is an essential feature of the caste system is a religious or ritual inequality. The caste structure is one of a system of rigid partitions dividing caste from caste. At the same time the totality of all the various separate castes constitutes a single religious community the unity of which is provided by Hinduism as a system of ritual and belief. The social separation of caste from caste is something very different from the social separation of Hindus and Muslims.

114 In connexion with the study of the inter-relations of religion and
● 182 social structure, therefore, the material presented by Dr. Srinivas is of very special interest and value. To define the position of an individual Coorg in the total structural system of the society in which he lives we have, in the first place, to consider him as a member of a particular joint-family (*okka*). To this there corresponds, in the field of religious behaviour, his participation in the domestic cult. This cult, with respect to its most general features, may be compared with domestic cults of the kind usually referred to as 'ancestor worship' which are found in many other peoples.

The Coorg individual is also a member of a village community, which is itself part of the Coorg local community, and so part of the wide Hindu community. Religious behaviour in this connexion

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is participation in the worship of the gods, who are both local gods and also identified with the gods of the Hindu pantheon.

But the Coorg is also a member of one of the hundreds of caste divisions of Hindu social structure. Religious behaviour in this connexion consists of the careful observance of the caste rules, so that ritual pollution is avoided. I believe that Dr. Srinivas intends to give us at some time an account of how the caste structure actually affects the social life within a village, a subject on which, hitherto, we have had no information.

In the kinds of societies with which anthropologists are chiefly concerned a direct relation between religion and social structure is to be discovered in the belief that is held that the due performance of religious rites contributes to the well-being of a group, or to the maintenance of a certain social order. This is seen in Coorg in both the domestic cult which is carried out in order to ensure the well-being of the joint-family, and also in the village cult. In what are sometimes called the higher religions there appears a different feature in the belief in some kind of personal salvation as something to be aimed at by the individual in his observance of religion. Like Christianity and Buddhism, Hinduism in its more philosophical form also holds out to the individual the hope of personal salvation, often conceived as release from the round of reincarnation. The problem of the social function of religious beliefs of this kind is highly complex. It is clear, however, that to examine the social effects of such religions we have to consider them as formulating for the members of a church an ideal of human conduct.

The rich religious life of the Coorgs is compounded of several strands. We can separate these by successively considering the individual as a member of a family group, as a member of a village community, as a worshipper of the deities of the Hindu pantheon, as a member of a particular caste and therefore having his place in the whole widespread caste structure, and finally as being at least influenced by the religious and philosophical system of Hinduism with its formulation of ideals of human conduct. For the student of comparative religion, and particularly for those interested in the sociological study of religion, this book of Dr. Srinivas offers material of exceptional value.

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467 596 water from the domestic pond or well and carry manure in reed baskets to the fields.

562 [521] The sexes are generally segregated. The outer veranda serves as a club for the men, and they sit down on the benches there, drinking, chewing betel, and talking. The women rarely visit the veranda.[1] Similarly, men rarely join the women who are all presumably sitting in the kitchen, or in one of the inner rooms. [244] Men and women dine separately, the women dining after the men.

[574] When relatives visit a Coorg house, the men guests join the men hosts in the veranda, whereas the women guests join the women hosts in an inner part of the house. During the harvest [533] festival and festival of the village-deities the men sing and dance while the women watch them from a distance. Usually the men [791] play a more active part in the festivals than the women. There is an oracle in the festival of every village-deity, and the oracles are usually men. Women oracles are indeed rare, but where they function they are important.

562 684 Women are expected to observe a stricter code of conduct than men. For instance, formerly, a Coorg woman who had committed adultery with a low-caste man was summarily thrown out of caste, whereas a lapse on the part of a man was not treated with equal seriousness. Again, there was some difference in the punishment meted out to a man and woman: a man was liable to be fined or excommunicated, whereas excommunication was the only punishment for a woman.

182 562 Different ideals are held up for men and women. Strength, skill in fighting and hunting, and courage are admired in a man. A proverb states, 'men should die on the battlefield, and women should die in child-bed'. The killer of a tiger or panther and mother of ten children were both accorded the honour of a *mangala* ceremony. (See Chapter III.)

562 Formerly women seem to have enjoyed greater freedom than they do nowadays. Elderly informants remember that even as recently as fifty years ago women used to sing and beat cymbals in public on festive occasions. Coorg folksongs tell us of women who killed tigers and held assemblies of men to ridicule. In some folk-

[342] [1] Frequently a Coorg house has a separate entrance which enables the women to move in and out of the house without being seen by the men who are gathered in the veranda.

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III

THE RITUAL IDIOM OF COORGS

(1) THE RITUAL COMPLEX OF *MANGALA*

I

182 788 EVERY society has a body of ritual, and certain ritual acts forming part of the body of ritual repeat themselves constantly. Not only ritual acts, but also ritual complexes, which are wholes made up of several individual ritual acts, frequently repeat themselves. Several such ritual complexes and some individual ritual acts might be together knit into a still wider ritual whole which repeats itself occasionally.

576 Salutation is an individual ritual act. It might be of two kinds, either elaborate as that adopted by a young person towards an elder on a ritual occasion, or simple, like that prevailing between two equals. In the former case the younger person thrice touches the older man's feet with both hands, and after each touch he takes the hands to his forehead where he brings them together. In the simpler form of salutation which prevails between equals, each person folds the palms before his chest, and as he does this he moves his head slightly to indicate a bow. The folding of the palms and bowing of the head are the most important parts of the ritual act of salutation.

Salutation of the elaborate kind is only one of several ritual acts in the ritual complex of *mūrta* (*vide infra*), and *mūrta* is again part of *mangala*. Formerly there were several kinds of *mangalas* and the narrowing down of *mangala* to mean marriage exclusively is a fairly recent phenomenon.

88 [304] [301] Formerly *mangala* was performed to mark the attainment of social adulthood by a boy when his ears were ritually bored by the goldsmith. This *mangala*, the first to be performed for a boy, was called *hemmi kutti mangala*, or 'the *mangala* at which the ears are bored'. The wearing of ear-rings was symbolical of the attainment of social adulthood. One who was physiologically an adult, but who had not undergone the ear-boring *mangala*, did not count as an adult for ritual and social purposes.

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765 302 widower, ritual mourning lasts sometimes six months, and during this entire period shaving is forbidden.

765 382 The restriction on shaving is only one of several restrictions imposed on the mourners, and in order to understand its meaning completely all the restrictions have to be taken into consideration. The mourners are forbidden to consume meat, honey, betel leaves and areca-nut, mushrooms, and liquor. They may not go to a temple, or wedding, or dance. They have to wear mourning dress, and they have to perform certain ritual. It is necessary to emphasize that these restrictions have to be observed. They show to the outside world that the mourner is 'concerned' in the death that has occurred.

There are degrees of 'concern': the close relatives have to show greater concern than distant kindred. The mourning period is longer for them, and they are marked off from the others in other ways too. The obligatory expression of concern in the culturally defined manner serves to maintain a certain kinship and social structure.

VII

783 [343] The preparatory, purificatory ritual act which comes after shaving is a ritual bath. It is usual for three[1] married women to give this ritual bath to the subject. The *guḍḍa* or bathroom is a room outside the main building of the ancestral house, and the subject [533] marches in state to it. The procession is headed by pipers and drummers followed by four Coorgs beating a tiny drum and singing the traditional 'road song'. At a wedding, after the groom [585] returns in state from his bath, the best man[2] helps to dress him in ritual robes and ornaments.

[515] A Coorg washes his hands, feet, and face before saluting the sacred wall-lamp every day, morning and evening; and on festival days he takes a bath and changes into clothes washed by the washerman. Both bath and change of clothes are preliminary to prayer.

It is usual to approximate physical impurity to ritual impurity.

[177] [1] Odd numbers have ritual value in Coorg as elsewhere in south India. Number '3' is specially sacred. A person usually walks thrice round a sacred object like a tripod stool, temple, and funeral pyre.

[2] The best man (*bōjakāra*) is a married man, and the bride has a matron of honour (*bōjakarati*).

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769 It is important to remember that Sārtāvu is Ayyappa, the son
776 of Shiva and Vishṇu in the form of Mōhini. The lawless spirit of a magician-cum-fighter is tamed by making it subordinate to a deity who has been completely Sanskritized.

XII

182 The hierarchical idea inherent in caste expresses itself in a
564 variety of ways at the festival of a village-deity. For instance, at
782 the Kētrappa festival in Bēngūr, the fowls brought as offerings to the deity by members of the higher castes are decapitated by a Coorg, and the pigs brought by them, by a Paṇika. But neither the Coorg nor the Paṇika decapitates the animals brought by the lower castes like the Mēda and Poleya. The animals brought by the latter are decapitated by a Mēda.

Usually, the man who sacrifices the animal gets its head as his perquisite. The animal is then divided into two halves, one half going to the owner and the other to the village. Each *okka* in the village gets a share in the half which goes to the village. But the animals offered by Mēdas and Poleyas are not divided in this manner, nor do they get a share in the animals brought by the higher castes. That is to say, in this context, the village does not include the Mēda and Poleya. Nor does it include the Brahmin who does not sacrifice animals to deities.

182 The deities Kākkōṭ Achchayya, and Akkavva, according to the
564 folksong, leave Malabar to seek shelter in Coorg. After crossing
773 into Coorg they meet a Poleya deity, Kāryappa, whom they take as their servant. The three deities then go to Kākkōṭ village where they see some children playing. Kākkōṭ Achchayya and Akkavva possess Coorg children, whereas Kāryappa possesses a Poleya boy. In this instance, the caste-idiom is completely projected into mythology and religion.

776 The deities Kētrappa (m.) and Koḍli Povvedi (f.) are both
182 recipients of offerings of non-vegetarian dishes and liquor. Coorgs explain this by saying that both the deities lost their caste on coming into Coorg. In fact there is an incident in the Kētrappa song giving an account of the change in the dietetic habits of the deity: while returning to Bēngūr from Malabar, Kallumāḍa Ayyaṇṇa, who was possessed by Kētrappa, put everyone to sleep while he climbed a *bainé* (caryota urens) tree and drank toddy from

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the pot at the top. His followers woke up before he had climbed down and demanded an explanation from him. Kētrappa (i.e. Ayyaṇṇa) replied that until then he was only receiving sandalwood paste and flowers,[1] but from then on he would receive instead 'blue-bubble toddy and crowing cocks'.

Deities have a tendency to adopt the customs of their devotees. It is natural then for the deity from Malabar to switch over to the Coorg's diet on reaching Bēngūr. But this diet is not the diet of the Brahmins. Coorgs explain the dietetic preference of their deities by saying that they 'lost their caste': a certain ambivalence can be detected in this attitude, an attitude which presumably prevails towards their own diet. They like non-vegetarian food and liquor, but at the same time consider vegetarianism as more ethical.

[1] Brahmin priests in Coorg, Malabar, and South Canara use sandalwood paste and flowers, among other things, for the worship of deities.

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VII

HINDUISM

I

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ATTEMPTS to define an enormously complex and amorphous phenomenon like Hinduism have usually ended in failure. No definition will be attempted here, but instead some important characteristics will be mentioned.

Hinduism has a long history, in the course of which it has spread over the whole of India. Buddhism, in origin a Hindu schism, is now the religion of a great part of Asia.

The structural basis of Hinduism is the caste system which occasionally even survives conversion to Christianity or Islam. The hierarchical system, with the Brahmin and Untouchable at either end, represents a fusion of Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic systems of ritual and beliefs. Each caste has both Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic ritual and beliefs, but the proportions in which the two are found together vary from caste to caste, and also from region to region. It is now possible to understand how Hinduism is able to include within itself the worship of trees, rivers, and mountains, and cults of ancestors and village-deities, as well as the profound philosophy of the Upanishads and Vēdānta, and the mysticism of the Bhakti Schools. Reformist sects like the Jains and Lingāyaṭs ended by becoming castes which resulted in walls being built round them, while, at the same time, they remained within the fold of Hinduism. The caste system has enabled a vast number of tiny groups with distinct cultures, occupations, and systems of belief to live side by side, the autonomy of each being respected while at the same time co-operation was ensured between them. But in the history of India the idea of hierarchy has occasionally been questioned, and unsuccessful attempts have been made to overthrow the caste system. More frequent, however, has been the effort of lowly placed groups to raise their status as a group by Sanskritizing their ritual and belief.

Rites and beliefs have been constantly undergoing a process of Sanskritization. This is going on both inside and outside Hinduism. The rites and beliefs of the castes occupying the lower rungs

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of the caste-ladder as well as the rites and beliefs of outlying communities hidden away in the forest-clothed mountains of India have been subjected to Sanskritization. The presence of completely Sanskritized worship of rivers, trees, and mountains in Hinduism, and their incorporation in the vast mythology of Hinduism, make easier the assimilation of the ritual and beliefs of the lower castes and of communities remaining outside Hinduism.

Hinduism is not static. Like every living religion it has continually reacted to the political and social forces of the time, both influencing them and being influenced by them. In the last hundred years it has produced reformist movements like the Brahmo Samāj, Ayra Samāj, and the Rāmakrishṇa Mission. Mahātma Gāndhi himself in his fight against Untouchability and in the many other reforms he advocated provides us with an instance of the dynamic nature of Hinduism.

While the intellectual has all along concentrated on the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gīta, and the Philosophical Systems, to the ordinary Hindu the innumerable feasts, fasts, *vratas* (rites and austerities performed to achieve certain ends), pilgrimages, and occasional visits to nearby temples constitute the stuff of religious life. The *purāṇas* (stories illustrating the works and powers of the gods), *itihāsas* (consisting of the two epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata), and stories about local saints and the songs sung by them, all have a conspicuous place in day-to-day living.

II

The concept of 'spread' has been used throughout this book: Hinduism has been split up, for purposes of analysis, into 'All-India Hinduism', 'Peninsular Hinduism', 'Regional Hinduism', and finally purely 'Local Hinduism'. All-India Hinduism is Hinduism with an All-India spread, and this is chiefly Sanskritic in character. Peninsular Hinduism spreads over the entire peninsular part of India, while Regional Hinduism has a more restricted spread. A 'Region' has to be defined in every case, and in this book Malabar, South Canara, and Coorg Proper may be said to constitute a Region. Local Hinduism is Hinduism with its spread confined to Coorg Proper, or even a smaller area within it. In a very broad sense it is true that as the area of spread decreases, the number of ritual and cultural forms shared in common

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The spread of Sanskritization being a matter of spontaneous growth produces certain inconsistencies. For instance, the main body of Coorgs propitiate their dead ancestors by offering meat and liquor with the Baṇṇa acting as oracle, as well as by offering balls of rice-flour under the guidance of a Brahmin priest. Amma Coorgs, a Sanskritized division of Coorgs, make the inconsistency in the customs of the main body of Coorgs all the more glaring by observing annual *shrāddhas* (propitiation of ancestors with balls of rice using Sanskrit *mantras*) after the manner of Brahmins, and by completely eschewing the other mode of propitiation.

Many village-deities who are made out to be forms of Mahādēva (or Shiva), and goddesses who are made out to be Povvedi (i.e. Bhagavati, wife of Shiva), are offered meat and toddy. Side by side with these deities, Coorgs offer worship at the temples of Tala Kāvēri, Rāmēshwara in Irpu, and Omkārēshwara in Mercara, where the priests are Brahmins and Sanskrit *mantras* are used, and where only offerings of fruit and flowers are permitted.

Inconsistencies are also seen on the plane of belief. It has been mentioned earlier that the Coorg funeral song says that the man died because the ration of rice kept for him by God Nārāyaṇa was finished; and the survivors pray God not to cause the dead man to be reborn as living is synonymous with suffering. These ideas are entirely consistent with Sanskritic theology. But at another place in the funeral song the mourner says, 'Nārāyaṇa's thieving horde (*kaḷḷa paḍé*) came to kill you. Had I known it, I would have hacked the horde to pieces.' This is entirely consistent with the martial idiom of Coorgs, but inconsistent with the ideas of Sanskritic theology mentioned earlier.

As a rule, educated Coorgs turn more and more to Sanskritic deities, rites, and beliefs. The Rāmakrishṇa Mission is active in Coorg, and in recent years it has been responsible for carrying the message of philosophical Hinduism to Coorgs. In the last thirty years four Coorgs have become *sanyasis*, dedicating their lives to prayer and meditation and the active service of their fellow men. One of these *sanyasis* has a hermitage (*āshrama*) called appropriately *Kāvēri Āshrama*.

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It is the sib, moreover, that

614 takes part in the communal affairs of village or district through
182 its headman; though all the affairs of the country must have been conducted by the hierarchy built up on this basis in the days before the rajahs and the British government, nowadays it is only social matters that are governed in this way and even these now tend to find their settlement in the courts. In some
614 religious ceremonies the sibs rather than the individuals seem
796 to play the chief part, e.g. at the village Karavaleba:daga near Mercara at the padra:linamme (ceremony of Bhadrakāḷi) in the month mi:nia:ru, a dance called kodia:ṭu, is performed on several days both at the temple and on the dancing-green. In this the essential performers are a male member of each sib in the village, carrying each a kodi, or staff surmounted by cloth tied in the form of two cones with their bases together and the apex of one pointing upward. Each performer has his right arm bare and a fold of his turban hanging down his back. If all the male members of a sib should be unable to dance because of age or infirmity, the kodi must be carried by a member of another sib along with that of his own sib. It is the sibs that are represented at the performance, and individuals who dance in the line after the men carrying the staffs are a non-essential part of the performance, carry no staffs, do not wear their dress in the distinctive fashion of the sib-representatives, and may at any time drop out of the dance, which is forbidden for the staff-carriers. Again, in the Huttari festival (Coorg name: [243] puṭëri), when the first ceremonial cutting of the rice-harvest takes place, the ceremony should be performed not at each house of a sib, but at their original sib-house, the traditional center of the sib. It is only the wide geographical spread of a sib and the inconvenience that would result if the far-flung families had to gather in one small locality that makes it allowable for some families of a sib to hold their celebration at their separate dwelling-houses.

614 The sibs are exogamous. This rule has been stated by Ananthakrishna Iyer in the form that no marriage is possible between two persons of the same family name. This however is not quite accurate. The number of sibs in Coorg is unknown; some indication of their number is given by the fact that one of the large and prominent sibs is connected directly, i.e. by marriage of its members, with some fifty-five other sibs. But in the case of some of the sibs which have representatives in most of the villages of Coorg, the spread over the whole country is of so ancient a date that it is not remembered what the relationship is between some of the more distant branches. In such cases the Coorgs regard the sub-divisions as distinct sibs, and intermarriage is allowed between the branches; i.e. in these exceptional cases two persons of the same sib-name may marry, if there is no known relationship between the two branches and if there is no more recent relationship between the individuals.

hold duties for 60 days to recover her normal health, and devote herself to her baby. During this period she daily bathes in hot water after having been well rubbed with castor oil before a charcoal fire. The robust health of a Coorg woman is no doubt due to the care taken by them during pregnancy and confinement.

Naming Ceremony

As soon as a Coorg boy is born, a little bow of a castor oil plant stick with an arrow made of a leaf stalk of the same plant is put into his little hands and a gun is fired in the courtyard. He is thus at taking his first breath introduced into the world as a future hunter and warrior. This ceremony is not generally now observed. On the twelfth day after birth, the child is laid into a cradle by the mother or grandmother who gives the name, which in many instances is well sounding and significant. Boys are known by Belliappah, Ponnappa, Mandanna and girls Puvakka, Muthakka and Chinnamma. The Coorg women are very prolific and bear children to the extent of ten or twelve. In cases of necessity a wet-nurse is engaged, but infanticide is not practised.

Family

The Coorg family is of the patriarchal type. It is the domicile of all male relatives and their children belonging to one parental stock. Two or three generations, grandfather, grandmother, their sons, daughters, daughters-in-law and other children numbering from 20 to 60 or even more in some cases, all live and mess together. The labourers who were once their slaves belong to the family and depend on their mistress for food and orders. So long as there is peace and harmony, a Coorg family is a fine example of the patriarchal type. Every domestic affair of importance can be undertaken only with the consent of the senior member. He is expected to look after the principal needs of the family and its members individually and check irregularities of all kinds by sound discipline. The nature and extent of his control may be gathered from the fact that married sons and their wives choose their residence under the paternal roof to avoid the responsibility of a separate establishment. The senior female member is the queen of the household, and holds a corresponding position among the junior members and their wives and daughters. The peace and harmony of the family that once prevailed may be marred by discord, by the harsh treatment of an imperious mother-in-law, by the jealousy and heart-burnings of the married members of the material questions affecting the family income and individual claims. The senior member who is the Karnavan of the family has no easy position under such circumstances. The domestic life under normal circumstances is brightened by the affection of the children for their parents and relatives, and the little ones, of whom there is generally a good number, are in turn great pets of the family. The bearing of the young in the presence of the old is decorous, but the grown-up members are not

596 generally well guarded in the use of proper expressions in their talk with the young. The educated men of the present day exercise a potent influence for good in the normal conversation, and show due respect to their [607] brother's wife with whom no familiarity is allowed. There is a tendency [173] at present among the discontented members to break up the ancestral family [578] by a division of the family property among the members.

Property and Disposal

423 The property of the Coorgs consists chiefly of the ancestral house
425 and the land belonging to it which under the Rajas was held on a feudal
177 tenure and on a light assessment termed *jamma bhumi* or birthright land, because it was inalienably vested in the family or house, and the British Government confirmed the settlement. Additional land was taken up by them on the *sagu* tenure, but, in course of time, Government allowed to some extent such *sagu* land to be converted into *jamma* land. Other land held as jagir was granted for certain Government service as *umbli* land on a light assessment. During the last thirty years, many houses have opened out coffee plantations on their own or Govern-
434 ment land, or rented cardamom jungles. Thus the actual wealth of the
421 Coorgs consists of landed property and their prosperity depends on the
596 exertions and means of cultivation; but imprudent enterprises and un-
[556] expected reverses have caused much embarrassment. Formerly, all the members of a Coorg house lived together in the ancestral home or in some outfarm, *koppu*, neither of which could be alienated nor subdivided among the members of the family. All of them worked for the common good under the management of the *yajamana* or *karakara*, and had their subsistence on the proceeds. Any surplus on the annual reckoning became
[433] the property of the house for providing incidental expenditure on the occasion of marriages, funerals, and other ceremonies, as also for the purchase of new land in the interest of the family. If, however, an individual member by becoming a salaried officer or by coming into possession of money through marriage, was enabled to enter upon private speculation without any aid from the ancestral house, any property or acquirements thus made became his private property and were left at his own disposal by gift or will. Many young men have thus become
[591] separated from the ancestral house and established a new homestead, and as long as they contributed to the expenses of the former, they maintained
● [182] their share in the proceeds. This is the proper mode of setting up a new house. Disintegration is now setting in, and some try to break up the ancestral houses by a division of the landed property among the members.

Adoption

597 The right of adoption is given to every Coorg house in the absence of male issue, or by an unmarried man or woman or widower in order to secure the inheritance of personal property or rights.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

cribed to the curses and witchcrafts of enemies. The dead are supposed to trouble the living and to demand sacrifices and other atonements. Many of the Coorgs, though they may despise their old superstitions and neglect their idols, come to believe in nothing but money. The cruel despotism of their Rajahs engendered dissimulation, falsehood and treachery, and lying and deception, bribery and conspiracy are now often enough practised to ruin an opponent and to advance self-interest. The name of the Coorgs is still feared by their neighbours who look upon them as proud, irritable and revengeful men, and such popular estimations of the character of a neighbouring race are seldom without some foundation. It still may happen, that the head of a Coorg house on his dying bed will solemnly charge his sons to seek vengeance on his personal enemies, a bequest which occasions calamitous feuds between succeeding generations.

The Coorgs have hitherto been an unlettered people. The Rajahs, themselves without education, did nothing for the instruction of their subjects. Even the English Government has for many years hardly attempted systematically to raise them in intelligence and character. Only lately most praiseworthy efforts have been made to satisfy the awakened popular desire for education in Coorg, and the provisions made have already borne good fruit in supplying Government with a body of well trained officials, though education is still in its first stage of development.

The public morality of the Coorgs is controlled by a council of elders called "Takka-mukyastaru", who are the moral censors and managers of social affairs, without however any magisterial power from Government. This institution dates from the Rajahs' time and is hereditary in certain families. The authority of the village Takkas extends over offences against social customs, attendance at public feasts and proper conduct during the same, drunkenness and adultery.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

The offender has to appear before the council of the elders of the village, at the Ambala (a council-room on the village green), where the matter is investigated and discussed. The presiding Takka pronounces the sentence which may amount to a maximum fine of rupees 10. Should the offender refuse to pay, he will be excommunicated, when he may appeal to the "Nád-mukyastaru", that is the assembly of all the village Takkas of the district, and their decision is final. An outcast Coorg may after years be restored to his former status on paying the imposed fine. To the influence of these guardians of public morality the orderly conduct of the Coorgs in public is principally owing. It is, however, to be feared, that the increasing wealth and influence of many Coorg houses modify the strict control of the Takkas and make them more complaisant to the rich, which tendency will inevitably result in a decline of their authority and a greater laxity of public morality. Intemperance, which in the times of the Rajahs was rigorously repressed, is now rather encouraged by the numerous liquor shops, which are decidedly on the increase all over the country. It requires a new impulse on the part of the better type of Coorgs to combine in vigorous combat, especially during their festivities, against this ruinous enemy, and a victory gained on this field will be more glorious and beneficial to the Coorgs than their repeated triumphs over their Mahomedan antagonists of old. When the Coorgs have once embraced the truth of Christianity and placed themselves under the regenerating influence of the Gospel, they will become a noble race, probably not much inferior in bodily, moral and intellectual powers to their present European Rulers!

1: Srinivas
182,●771

AW5 Coorg AW5

[This entire source deals in a general way with the functional interrelationship between religion and social structure.]